



April 11, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: City of Wichita, KS – TIGER Grant Application for the Northern Flyer Project

Dear Secretary Foxx:

On behalf of the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation (WDDC), we would like to express the WDDC's support for the City of Wichita's 2014 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER 2014) Grant Application for the Northern Flyer Project. The WDDC represents a constituency of thousands of Downtown business and property owners in Wichita.

Specifically, the WDDC recommends that Wichita's application for Tier I and Tier II environmental reviews as well as preliminary engineering be approved and funded to close the 200 mile Service Gap that exists in Amtrak's National Network by extending the Heartland Flyer passenger train (also known as the Northern Flyer) from Oklahoma City to Newton, Kansas to connect with the Southwest Chief.

The Northern Flyer [aka Heartland Flyer Extension] Project is an outstanding example of a project that supports the long-term national goals that have been established by the TIGER Grant Program. It is multi-jurisdictional, requiring the cooperation of both the Kansas and Oklahoma State Departments of Transportation as well as the City of Wichita. Development of passenger service in this corridor is also identified in the most current National Rail Plan released by the Federal Railroad Administration.

The proposed underlying project would also connect thousands of workers outside the Wichita metropolitan area to jobs, training, and services not only in Downtown Wichita, but throughout the metropolitan area. Moreover, multiple communities in northern Oklahoma look to Wichita for access to other modes of transportation, medical services and amenities, yet are economically disadvantaged with poor transportation choices (no air, rail or bus service). Through strengthened connections, a more prosperous economy will develop in the region.

Enthusiasm for the project has grown greatly and includes funding sources that have been secured through local and state entities to complete the environmental review phase of development. By closing this 200 mile "service gap", the Kansas Department of Transportation ("KDOT"), the Oklahoma Department of Transportation ("ODOT"), the City of Wichita and others have partnered to improve the region's manufacturing base, worker productivity, economic development, trade & commerce, to reduce the cost of travel for commuters, and better connect the significant rural areas to the region's life blood, its metropolitan centers.

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The City of Wichita is a regional economic base for over one million individuals in the State of Kansas. Over six million individuals visit the area on an annual basis. The development of Downtown, since 2010 – the year of the adoption of a new Downtown Master Plan – Project Downtown, has yielded more than \$249 million in private sector investment and approximately \$33 million in public sector investment (see attached map). When including the construction of the INTRUST Bank Arena, the total investment in the city center exceeds \$478 million since 2010. Development interests remain vibrant with over \$110 million in projects in various phases of due diligence. Importantly, this investment includes a diversity of housing opportunities (see attached map), commercial, hospitality, retail and job creation.

Of the 26,000 jobs in Downtown Wichita, the 2010 US Census identifies that approximately 27% of the workforce commutes from outside of the Wichita metro area. The Northern Flyer passenger train, once built will provide a needed connection for people outside of the city who work Downtown, or who need and want services in the City of Wichita. By developing this project, the City of Wichita is thoroughly committed to its accelerated implementation.

Passenger rail in Downtown Wichita at Union Station will provide better connection to other modes of transportation such transit, bike paths and significantly, Wichita's new \$100 million national airport terminal that is currently under construction. With these and many other investments, the City of Wichita is emerging as a regional transportation hub and the expansion of passenger rail both complements and enhances these key initiatives.

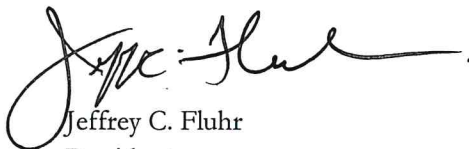
2014 Research conducted by Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA) documents that the Millennial generation (1977-2003), which comprises approximately 87 million individuals, prefer multiple modes of transportation and well-connected cities. Today, this demographic comprises 36% of the national workforce. By 2020, this percentage is projected to increase to 50%. The implementation of Passenger Rail service would increase Wichita's retention and recruitment initiatives of this growing sector of the workforce.

The Northern Flyer Extension Project meets the TIGER goals for significant regional and national impact and will be successful for generations. The Wichita Downtown Development Corporation appreciates the consideration of the City of Wichita's 2014 TIGER Grant Application for the Northern Flyer Project. We appreciate the opportunity to offer this letter of support.

Sincerely,



Sam Williams
WDDC Board Chairman
Wichita Downtown Development Corp.



Jeffrey C. Fluhr
President
Wichita Downtown Development Corp.